

ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 01/2022

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the New Year

January 1, 2022

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

Above all else clothe yourselves with love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

(Colossians 3:12,14)

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Let us greet the New Year of 2022, the centennial year of our Sacred Archdiocese of America, with the hope and faith that our renewal in Christ is at hand. We came through the past year with many accomplishments, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. The highlight of last year was surely the Apostolic Visit of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, but there were many other significant events as well.

We gathered once again in worship and fulfilled our journey with the Lord through Holy Week and Pascha. We inaugurated the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine with our first official participation in the commemorations of September Eleventh by lighting the Church with its signature illumination from within for the Twentieth Anniversary of 9/11. We reconvened in-person classes at our beloved Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and all the Orthodox Bishops of America were able to meet this past October for the first time since the pandemic began. All of these normative events signaled to us that we might be returning to pre-pandemic realities, but we are not quite there yet. We must still exercise prudence and caution, so that we protect our neighbors with the same care with which we protect ourselves.

This is why I urge all of us to hearken to the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Colossae: let us clothe ourselves with love, and forge that perfect bond of unity, which God wills for His Church. Especially in this centenary year of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, as an Institution and a Sacred Eparchy of the Venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the cultivation of our sincere and genuine love for one another is the path to perfecting the bonds of unity across the country.

Thus, as we enter this New Year of 2022, may we renew our appreciation and realization of God's precious gift of unity, and celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of our Sacred Archdiocese with love for one another and for every aspect of His creation.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America